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# FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS HOUSEHOLD APPLICATION AND VERIFICATION FORMS

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SCHOOL YEAR 2011-2012

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS

This packet contains prototype forms:

**Required** information that *must* be provided to households:

- Letter to Households
- Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application
- Notice to Households of Approval/Denial of Benefits<sup>1</sup> (notification is required if household is denied)

**Required** information for households selected for verification of eligibility information materials:

- Notification of Selection for Verification of Eligibility
- Letter of Verification Results

**Optional** application-related materials that *may* be provided to households:

- Sharing Information with Medicaid/SCHIP
- Sharing Information with Other Programs
- Notice to Households of Approval/Denial of Benefits<sup>1</sup> (notification is optional if household is approved)
- Notice of Direct Certification

The pages are designed to be printed on 8½" by 11" paper. Some pages may be printed front and back. You will need to identify the benefits that are offered in your school, such as afterschool snacks. The **[bold, bracketed fields]** indicate where you need to insert school district specific information. For example, you must include your district's no-charge telephone number for verification assistance on the verification materials. This prototype application package includes information regarding the exclusion of housing allowance for those in the Military Housing Privatization Initiative. If this is not pertinent to your school district, please modify as appropriate.

If modifications are made to the template letters and forms, you will need to submit your application package to the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) for approval. If you have questions, contact:

Arizona Department of Education  
School Nutrition Programs  
1535 West Jefferson Street, Bin #7  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

(602) 542-8700

<sup>1</sup>All households must be notified of their eligibility status. Households with children who are denied benefits must be given written notification of the denial. The notification must advise the household of the reason for the denial of benefits, the right to appeal, instruction on how to appeal, and a statement that the family may re-apply for free and reduced price meal benefits at any time during the school year. Households with children who are approved for free or reduced price benefits may be notified in writing or orally.

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# [INSERT SCHOOL DISTRICT LETTERHEAD]

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **[Name of School]** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **[\$]**; lunch costs **[\$]**. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is **[\$]** for breakfast and **[\$]** for lunch.

1. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced price meals. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Household Application for all students in your household.* We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to: **[name, address, phone number]**.
2. WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS? All children in households receiving benefits from SNAP, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations or TANF, can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits of the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.
3. CAN FOSTER CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income.
4. CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your child(ren) will get free meals, please call or e-mail **[school, homeless liaison or migrant coordinator information]** to see if they qualify.
5. WHO CAN GET REDUCED PRICE MEALS? Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on this application.
6. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? Please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at **[phone number]** if you have questions.
7. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT ANOTHER ONE? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
8. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILD(REN) GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an application.
9. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.
10. IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free or reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
11. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to school officials. You may also ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **[name, address, phone number, e-mail]**.

12. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You or your child(ren) do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
13. WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD? You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.
14. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.
15. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME? If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
16. MY SPOUSE IS DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT ZONE. IS THEIR COMBAT PAY COUNTED AS INCOME? No, if the combat pay is received in addition to their basic pay because of their deployment and it wasn't received before they were deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your school for more information.
17. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for SNAP or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1(800)352-8401.

If you have other questions or need help, call **[phone number]**.

*Si necesita ayuda, por favor llame al teléfono:* **[phone number]**.

*Si vous voudriez d'aide, contactez nous au numero:* **[phone number]**.

Sincerely,

**[signature]**

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# INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING

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*A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER IS ANY CHILD OR ADULT LIVING WITH YOU.*

## **Part 1:**

If any child you are applying for is homeless, migrant, or a runaway check the appropriate box and call **[your school, homeless liaison, migrant coordinator]**. Complete Box A and Box B in Part 2 and then skip to Part 3.

## **Part 2:**

- **Box A**—List all household members.
- **Box B** – List the name of the school attended by each child or mark N/A for household members not attending school.
- **Box C** – List the case number for any household member (including adults) receiving SNAP or TANF Cash Assistance or FDPIR benefits. Skip to Part 3.
- **Box D** – Check the box in this section for all children in the household who are foster children (legal responsibility of welfare agency or court). Skip to Part 3.
- **Box E** – For ANY household member, including children, with NO INCOME, you MUST check the “No Income” box.
- **Box F –Gross Income and How Often It Was Received:** For each household member, list each type of income received. Report how often the money is received—weekly, every other week, twice a month, monthly or yearly—by filling in the circle under the frequency amounts. **For earnings, be sure to list the gross income, not the take-home pay. Gross income is the amount earned *before* taxes and other deductions.** You should be able to find it on your pay stub or your employer can tell you. For other income, list the amount each person received from welfare, child support, alimony, pensions, retirement, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veteran’s benefits (VA benefits), disability benefits, Worker’s Compensation, unemployment or strike benefits, regular contributions from people who do not live in your household, and any other income. Do not include income from SNAP, FDPIR, WIC, Federal education benefits and foster payments received by the family from the placing agency.

For ONLY the self-employed, under *Earnings from Work*, report income after expenses. This is for your business, farm, or rental property. If you are in the Military Privatized Housing Initiative or get combat pay, do not include these allowances as income.

## **Part 3:**

Adult household member must sign the form and list the last four digits of their Social Security Number (or mark the box if she/he does not have one).

## **Part 4:**

Completing this section is optional.